



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/064,753	08/14/2002	Masato Kawai	9063-US-PA	8462

31561 7590 01/16/2003

JIANQ CHYUN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE
7 FLOOR-1, NO. 100
ROOSEVELT ROAD, SECTION 2
TAIPEI, 100
TAIWAN

EXAMINER

SPITZER, ROBERT H

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1724

DATE MAILED: 01/16/2003

3

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/064,753

Applicant(s)

KAWAI ET AL.

Examiner

Robert H. Spitzer

Art Unit

1724

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 August 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

1. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.
2. Applicants are requested to provide the Examiner with copies of those references cited in their specification and list the same on a PTO-1449 or equivalent form. Also, if any English language equivalents are available for those foreign references they should also be cited and provided.
3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
4. Claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Auvil et al. (5,240,474). Auvil et al. ('474) teach the use of carbon molecular sieves (CMS) for the production of enriched nitrogen gas by the adsorption of the oxygen component of feed air. A parameter termed the "characteristic time" is defined to be "the time required to reach 2/3 loading when a CMS initially at zero pressure is suddenly exposed to 1 atmosphere of a pure gas". Example 60, in particular, shows where the nitrogen adsorption time to reach 2/3 (67.7%) saturation is at least 72 times that of oxygen to reach the same saturation level, which occurs after 15.5 seconds. The 50% loading would obviously occur at a time less than that 15.5 seconds and would fall

Art Unit: 1724

within the approximately 5 to 10 seconds recited in these two claims, because the adsorption of the oxygen occurs much more quickly initially than it does after the passage of some time. That is, on CMS, oxygen is initially almost exclusively adsorbed before any nitrogen will be adsorbed thereon. Thus, at the lower time values, the adsorbent (CMS) will contain exclusively oxygen.

5. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Auvil et al. (5,240,474) in view of Gemba et al. (4,925,461). The claims differ from the teachings of Auvil et al. ('474) in the amount of oxygen in the product nitrogen being specified as containing 10000 ppm oxygen or less. Gemba et al. ('461) show that a PSA process utilizing a CMS adsorbent will result in the formation of a product nitrogen gas of at least 99.99% purity, which is 1000 ppm oxygen. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, that the PSA process of Auvil et al. ('474) which also utilizes CMS adsorbent to form a nitrogen product gas will result in a nitrogen product gas having 1000 ppm (or higher) oxygen therein, in view of the showing of Gemba et al. (461) that such CMS adsorbents are known to produce such purity streams by PSA processes.

6. The remaining references listed on the PTO-892 show art of interest.

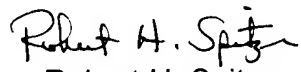
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert H. Spitzer whose telephone number is (703) 308-3794. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 5:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

Art Unit: 1724

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Simmons, can be reached on (703) 308-1972. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9310 and for After Final communications the fax number is (703) 872-9311.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

Robert H. Spitzer
January 7, 2003


Robert H. Spitzer
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724
January 7, 2003